

**PEACE JOURNALISM IN 140 CHARACTERS:  
A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF TWITTER BY ISRAEL AND  
PALESTINE NEWS SOURCES DURING OPERATION BROTHER'S KEEPER**

by  
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## **Abstract**

This study examined the use of Twitter as a means of message dispersion during Operation Brother's Keeper, the 2014 Israel Defense Forces' (IDF) engagement that was the prelude to the larger conflict Operation Protective Edge, which is known as the 2014 Israel-Gaza Conflict. Specifically, the questions at the center of this research relate to whether or not the news sources from either side of the conflict use the social media platform to leverage messages that were framed in terms of Norwegian sociologist and peace researcher Johan Galtung's peace journalism, as described by Annabel Lynch and Jake McGoldrick in their book *Peace Journalism* (2005). One of the primary goals of peace journalism is to reduce tension and the risk of escalation; being that Operation Brother's Keeper was followed by another, larger, more violent, engagement, it is worth wondering to what extent—if at all—where attempts made by the media to apply tenets of peace journalism to their digital communications. Using qualitative research methods, this body of research examined the use of the principles of peace journalism (as well as the inverse, war journalism) via Twitter by six sources (three from each side of the conflict) during the entirety of the IDF's Operation Brother's Keeper. The results of this research and the analysis of thousands of individual tweets indicated a lack of peace journalism reporting styles with tendencies of war journalism being more prevalent within the 140 characters provided.

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## **Preface**

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## **Introduction**

The evening of Thursday, June 12, 2014 interrupted relative calm in Israel with an event which would consume much of the following month; during the night three young Israeli men—Naftali Fenkel, Gilad Shaer, and Eyal Yifrah—were abducted from a bus stop in the Israeli Settlement Gush Etzion while hitchhiking home (Kershner, 2014). The following Friday morning, Israeli citizens were quick to begin their digital dive into all available media for information regarding the lives of these lost boys. This included many individuals taking to Twitter and leveraging metadata tags (commonly referred to as hashtags) to bring about discussion and to centralize information; to see the hashtag #BringBackOurBoys scribbled onto a piece of paper hastily taped to an office window was not an uncommon sight on the streets of Tel Aviv in the three weeks of time that made up Operation Brother's Keeper.

This is not the first instance of social media's role in this turbulent region. The impact of digital communications was nowhere more evident than in the Middle East/North Africa region (MENA) during the 2011 Arab Spring revolts, a series of revolutionary protests that were held virtually on social media before erupting on the streets of nations across the continent (Bruns, Highfield, & Burgess, 2013; Weist & Eltantawy, 2012). The platforms we have come to use daily for entertainment have found a solid use in the MENA region as a tool to not only talk, but also strive for change.

I was one of many individuals that awoke in Israel the next morning to the news on that warm June Friday morning in Tel Aviv. Having landed in Israel one day prior to the abductions, I was present for much of the search, arriving home one day before the demise of the young men was formally known. For three weeks, the Israeli government



searched for the missing men. During that time, rumors and speculation were common, in part because citizens were flocking not to the newspaper but to social media outlets to learn what they could about this news story; common knowledge that social media often offers incomplete details and unsubstantiated headlines, these outlets were the only accessible means of accessing information immediately following the kidnappings (“Rumor patterns,” 2016). As is common practice, Israel’s gag order prevented any official publication of a leaked emergency call, so citizens ventured onto platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp to find out what they could, and share what they knew (Hartman, Harkov, Lappin, 2014).

The use of social media technologies in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region is not a secret, especially in the face of social change and conflict. A campaign starting in 2012 worked toward developing online camaraderie between political enemies Israel and Iran in the “Israel Loves Iran”/ “Iran Loves Israel” Facebook initiative (Kuntsman & Raji, 2012). Recent research has also indicated that one of the most popular rationales for logging in to these assorted platforms is that it has made it much easier to connect with others (Davis, 2015, para. 7). However, there has been reason to believe that while social media can connect people, it can also repel and divide populations, especially in face of adversity and conflict. With a simple post, reaction (such as like, love, haha, wow, or sad on Facebook), or tweet, words meant to connect can instantly take on incendiary attribute, pushing sides farther apart on an already polarizing issue.

This thesis examines how news sources utilized social media and how their reporting upheld (or failed to uphold) the tenants of peace journalism in the face of

conflict. This qualitative analysis examines tweets published during the Israel Defense Forces' (IDF) search and subsequent action taken in response to the kidnapping and murder of the three aforementioned young men. Labeled Operation Brother's Keeper, this IDF campaign spurred extensive public and media reaction that created public outcry for information on the search for the young men. Tweets analyzed were published within the date range of these two operations, which began on June 13, 2014, and unofficially resolved on July 7, 2014 with the beginning of Operation Protective Edge on July 8, 2014 ("Operation 'Protective Edge,'" 2014). The official conclusion of Operation Brother's Keeper was not until September 23, 2014, when the IDF chief of staff, General Lieutenant Benny Gantz announced the two Palestinians wanted for the murders were killed ("Gantz," 2014).

The events of these 23 days and the thousands of tweets hurled from either side are worthy of consideration in light of the conflict's context in the greater narrative of the region. It is worth wondering, however, its greater place in the discourse of war reporting, specifically as it relates to the competing frames of peace journalism versus war journalism; peace journalism relates to the strategic choices of the journalist to cover in a way to provide non-violent responses to the conflict, while war journalism focuses on the events in a way tilted towards violence ("(1) What is peace journalism?," n.d., para. 1 and 9). To explore the place of social media in the discussion related to peace communications, these events and the words used during them are the focus of the following research questions.

## **Literature Review**

### **The case for peace journalism**

Galtung, a pioneer of peace research, once said that “peace appeals to the heart; studies to the brain. Both are needed, indeed indispensable” (Galtung, 1987, para. 25). This thesis seeks to walk the delicate line between heart and brain, enhancing understandings of peace journalism’s role during times of conflict. Specifically, this work examines the role of peace journalism during the three-weeks of Israel Defense Force’s Operation Brother’s Keeper, the predecessor to Operation Protective Edge, which was the seven-week period of conflict between Israel and Gaza that endured during the summer of 2014.

The purpose of peace journalism is most clearly articulated by Galtung, stating that “[j]ournalism’s role is not only to report on the world, but also make key actors--states, capital, people--transparent to each other” (Galtung, 2015, p. 321). Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) expand on these thoughts related to peace journalism in light of their careers as British journalists. They further Galtung’s definition by defining peace journalism as “when editors and reporters make choices--of what stories to report and about how to report them--that create opportunities for societies at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict” (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p. 5). By replicating a table that originated with Galtung’s research, Lynch and McGoldrick explain specific attributes that are consistent with peace journalism<sup>1</sup>. These attributes include:

- A peace/conflict orientation that investigates conflict formation with a win-win orientation

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<sup>1</sup> The complete chart as it appears in Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) can be viewed as Table 1 in the appendix.

- Truth-oriented research to expose untruths and cover-ups of each side
- An emphasis on all parties and their suffering; and a highlighting of peace initiatives that not only push to resolve the current conflict, but also prevention of future turmoil (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p. 6).

In addition to simplifying the theory of peace journalism through a clear visualization of its tenets, this table does double duty by also providing an explanation of the tenets of the inverse of peace journalism: War journalism. Lynch and McGoldrick use Galtung's research to define war or violence journalism, as having the following traits:

- A focus on the arena of war as two parties with one goal (to win) and only one winner
- An orientation towards propaganda to expose the untruths of one side was covering up one's own misdeeds
- Centering on the suffering of the elite of one side
- A core need for victory, indicating that peace means a clear victor and a cessation of hostilities once that winner is declared (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p. 6).

Within their text, Lynch and McGoldrick reference a September 30, 2002 international issue of *Newsweek* as an example of war journalism. The cover of this specific international issue places former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and then-United States president George W. Bush on opposite sides of a dark-colored background with the words "Who will win?" in-between, illustrating the idea that there are only two parties and that only one may win (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p. 7). The authors further

elaborate how this is a story frame, which is consistent with war journalism's emphasis on the role of two parties in conflict, with one naturally having to arise the victor.

Lynch and McGoldrick are not alone in their emphasis and support of peace journalism; other recent research emphasizes the importance of this method of journalism. Gilboa (2010) stresses the importance of peace journalism and its divergence from war journalism with the latter being a model that "polarizes people and escalates conflict" because it entices more "hatred and violence to avenge or stop 'them'" (Gilboa, 2010, pp. 101-102). Peace journalism, on the other hand, works to be "more truthful and attempts to de-escalate violence by highlighting peace and conflict resolution as much as violence" (Gilboa, 2010, p. 102). For this reason, Gilboa aggressively suggests that correspondents covering war should emphasize the aspects of conflict that appeal to human interests rather than the violence.

Discussion concerning the utility of peace journalism is not itself without conflict. Criticism of peace journalism rests heavily on Galtung's claim that peace journalism is a *journalism of attachment* (Galtung, 1998, as cited in Hanitzsch, 2004). *Journalism of attachment* itself encounters multiple meanings, but a more prominent definition that hits at the heart of peace journalism is that of Hanitzsch (2004), who defines journalism of attachment as "the idea that journalists have to take sides in the battle between 'good' and 'evil'" (p. 2). These assessments result in the removal of objectivity, a vital aspect of the craft of journalism (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2017). Hanitzsch further argues, "journalism of attachment actually belongs to the broad area of political relations as it clearly has the intention to alter attitudes and behaviors of the audiences" and that the communication goals desired by the journalist do not arise from the discipline itself but rather the "subjective

views” of the professional (Hantizsch, 2004, p. 8). Despite these critical attacks, Hantizsch’s review of journalism of attachment is not entirely negative. For example, he defines peace journalism as a “special mode of socially responsible journalism, a program or frame of journalistic news coverage which contributes to the process and making and keeping peace” (Hantizsch, 2004, p. 9). While this is not an endorsement of this theory, Hantizsch’s emphasizes in his conclusion that, regardless of agenda, the journalist is to report on what is occurring regardless of how those events are interpreted by their audience.

In addition to Hantizsch’s reluctant acceptance of peace journalism, Kempf (2002) also shares this discontent for peace journalism and journalism of attachment. In his research regarding conflict coverage and its part in conflict escalation, he notes how a journalist reports war and conflict is contingent upon the culture, geographic region, and society in which the conflict is occurring, or they are at risk of becoming propaganda and having their reports act as such. From this, Kempf expands on three points where the media has an active role in conflict escalation: Avoidance of coverage of events due to a lack of violence; journalists’ habit of organizing conflicts as a win-lose scenario; and their devotion to official sources and the propaganda produced through these officials.

Arguments against peace journalism and journalism of attachment are frequently countered by supporters of peace journalism. Kim (2011) explains why critiques of peace journalism akin to those offered by Kempf and Hantizsch are unrealistic. Through an in-depth analysis of interviews conducted by peace journalists with individuals involved with a range of violent events (such as genocide and mass murder), Kim discovered that while victims and witnesses were often the most emotional (and therefore the population

most driven towards dramatization), the audience said that truth and fact was still the most dominant news attribute they desired and that description the most common news form. Lukacovic (2016) further defends peace journalism, regarding it as a normative mass communication theory (a concept that examines what media should do for a society) that can grow, adapt, and further develop, as it aligns itself with “universal principles” that are required for this normative media framework to develop on a larger, global scale (p. 5).

As this world becomes even further connected, it is clear that the methods of communication as well as the channels through which news is reported are bound to evolve and change to keep in line with technology; the questions remain of if content will follow suit. To understand what card the media may play, it is important to understand the current trends in conflict reporting.

**Current styles of war and conflict reporting in modern mass media.** Research indicates that mass media, especially from western sources, holds a specific interest in violent stories for a variety of reasons, such as “political, financial, and professional interests” (Hussain & ur Rehman, 2015, p. 2). This focus cracks the foundation of peace journalism, turning Peace oriented, truth-oriented, people-oriented, and solution-oriented angles towards war journalism (Hussain & ur Rehman, 2015). Any journalist wishing to utilize peace journalism is already at risk of upsetting their audience since most consumers of news are not focused on the happy ending, but rather the rising action and escalation of the conflict towards its climax.

Trends toward war reporting because of the natural interest of the audience in conflict is possibly rooted in the natural plotline and character development that is

evident in conflict. In an examination of six months of media covering three Middle Eastern conflicts (the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, situations related to the Iranian nuclear program, and the civil war in Syria), the analysis suggests that direct conflict (such as war) produces narratives with an emphasis on violence rather than diplomacy, while geopolitical concerns (such as the Iranian nuclear crisis) yield results more interpretive of the framework of peace journalism (Tenenboim-Weinblatt, Hanitzsch, & Nagar, 2016). This research can serve as an explanation as to why some tales of war come and go, while others are like an epic, and they linger in words of journalists and thereby thrive in the minds of the audience. When it comes to coverage of conflict, it has a predisposition written into its narrative that makes war journalism an easy application, as the war itself is already telling the story. One story nearly as old as peace research and journalism themselves is that of the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

### **History of Israel-Palestine in Conflict**

**The Mandate, the War of Independence, the Green Line and beyond.** Before the onset of World War II and the increased exodus to the land that would become Israel and the Occupied Territories, discussion related to the creation of a Jewish state had begun early in the twentieth century. The area that became Mandatory Palestine was created in a land acquisition by the British government from the Ottoman Empire following World War I, a concession made by the empire in the Treaty of Lausanne. Following World War I, in his declaration of 1917, the United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour wrote to Lord Walter Rothschild (a leader within the Jewish community of Great Britain) that "[h]is Majesty's government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their



best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object” (“Balfour Declaration,” para. 1). It was also stressed in this letter that “nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine” (“Balfour Declaration,” para. 2), making it understood that the Arabs within the territory retain their freedoms as well.

Following the Balfour Declaration, the League of Nations granted Britain a Class A mandate for the area that was Mandatory Palestine. This mandate, which was put into effect on September 29, 1923, would be valid until 1948 and would do what Balfour declared; the mandate would provide the space to create a nation for Jewish individuals. Of course, one event occurred that was not anticipated in 1923: A second world war.

Immigration, both legal and clandestine, to the British Mandate of Palestine picked up during World War II. To suppress immigration, the British government released the White Paper, which insisted that it was not part of Britain’s policy for Palestine become a Jewish nation, a statement that violated the terms of the mandate set in 1923; however, conflict spread worldwide before further deliberation could occur. In the wake of this second war and prior to the expiration of the mandate (where the land would become its own sovereign nation) the newly created United Nations developed a partition plan (Resolution 181) that would divide up the land of Mandatory Palestine upon its expiration in May 1948. Before the United Nations could implement this division, the area erupted into war.

A civil war within the territory began in November 1947 between the Jewish forces and Palestinians living within the mandate who partnered with Arab volunteers from around the region (“Arab-Israel Wars,” 2019, para. 1). The United Kingdom had

originally intended to the Mandate to expire on August 1, 1948, but the date was moved up to May 14, 1948; on May 15, 1948, the future prime minister David Ben Gurion declared independence of the State of Israel (“Proclamation of Independence,” 2003). At this juncture in the war, it became known the Arab-Israeli War.

The Arab-Israel war continued until 1949. Between January and July of that year, Israel created a series of boundaries (commonly known as the armistice lines) with the major countries that aided Palestinians in this conflict (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria); these lines became known as the “Green Line,” which served as the de facto border of Israel for almost twenty years until the War of 1967 (also known as the Six Day War) would occur.

The Six-Day War, which was fought between Israel and Egypt, lasted from June 5-10, 1967, and resulted with Israel’s acquisition of the Sinai Peninsula Gaza Strip from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, and Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan. The result of this was a mass of refugees on both sides: hundreds of thousands of Palestinians left the acquired territories, and many Jewish citizens of Arab nations were forced to flee their homes as well.

These boundaries have stayed put for much of the time since 1967. Israel relinquished the Sinai Peninsula back to Egypt with the signing of a peace treaty in 1973. In 2005, Israel disengaged with Gaza, allowing that land to be self-governing. The disputed exception to these boundaries is the Israeli policy of settlement building within the West Bank, which places civilians of primarily Jewish heritage in communities within the boundaries of this disputed territory. With the Israel-Egypt peace treaty of 1973 and the 2005 disengagement with Gaza, all Israeli settlements were removed from those

territories; as of 2015, there were 130 settlements and 383,000 settlers living within the West Bank (Berger, 2017, map 1).

**Kidnapping as a tactic.** Three young men who called this area home met a feared fate in 2014, when an all-too-real kidnapping threat became their reality for Naftali Fenkel, Gilad Shaer, and Eyal Yifrah. Since 2011, American audiences have been captivated by the Showtime drama *Homeland*, the ongoing saga of CIA agent Carrie Mathison and her dedication to determining if U.S. Marines Sergeant Nicholas Brody was turned against his country during his time in captivity in Iraq. However, this story was not entirely original; her narrative (minus the love triangles) parallels that of Haim Cohen, head psychologist for the Israel Defense Forces in the Israeli television show *Hatufim* (English: *Prisoners of War*). *Hatufim*'s plot centers on Cohen being charged with the psychological examination of Nimrod Klein and Uri Zach, two of three Israeli soldiers returned after seventeen years of captivity by opposing forces in Lebanon. For two seasons, Israeli audiences watched a reality they knew all too well: The process of kidnapping, and the fallout from bargaining and hoping for only the best. In her analysis on the similarities and differences of these shows, Zanger (2015) discovered that the realism of these programs is contextual, the "historical moments" from which the Israeli *Hatufim* arose. This context was in the years after the Lebanese war and the second Intifada, as well as during a period of time when there was a national debate about prisoner exchanges. (p. 733) This discussion concerning prisoner exchanges as fodder for drama is not unfounded. An article published by *The Guardian* emphasized how such a show could be so vibrantly realistic; Hogan (2012) stresses that the emotional force behind such a show comes from the fact that with 1,500 prisoners of war residing in

Israel and over 10,000 captured Palestinian released within the last 25 years, art most certainly does imitate a life too well known to too many in this nation.

The abductions that riveted Israel during the summer of 2014 were not the first instance of kidnapping of Israelis by Palestinian forces; consistently since their founding in 1987 as a response to the First Intifada and through the return of the Gaza Strip in 2007, Hamas has resorted to abductions. The first recorded incident was the kidnapping and murder of Avi Sasportas in February 1989, which was followed three months later with the abduction and killing of Ilan Saadon in May of the same year (Solmfalvi, 2011, para. 7 & 10). These two were the first two of many attempts of abductions that would lead into the summer of 2014.

It has been reported that Hamas officials encourage kidnapping as a tactic as it tends to result in a large prisoner swap, even encouraging and educating operatives on how on specific procedures for abductions (Lake, 2014, para. 6). This practice, while unconscionable, is not without tactical merit. In one recent hostage swap one Israeli man, Gilad Shalit, was exchanged for 1,027 Palestinian detainees.

One of the most reported and renowned instances of Hamas-led kidnapping of Israelis is that of Shalit, a 19-year-old soldier in the IDF that was abducted on June 25, 2006, when Palestinian militants entered Israel from Gaza through an underground tunnel (Wilkinson, 2011, para. 2; “Free Gilad Shalit,” 2019, para. 1). In a situation where art imitates life, the kidnapping and release of Shalit were strikingly similar to the plot of the aforementioned award-winning Israeli drama: Multiple years in captivity, a much-anticipated release, and an agreement with terms that the country questioned, specifically the over one thousand Palestinian prisoners that were released to return Shalit to Israel

(Wilkinson, 2011, para. 21). While there was overwhelming support for the release deal, families who lost members as a result of terror were staunchly against the deal, implying that those who killed once in the name of terror can do so again (Wilkinson, 2011, para. 22).

While kidnapping is a less prevalent tactic for Israeli operatives, there is substantial criticism regarding the number of Palestinian detainees held by Israel. As of July 3, 2018, The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (also known as B'Tselem) stated that there were 5,732 Palestinian prisoners and detainees held in Israel Prison Services ("Statistics on Palestinians," 2018, para. 1). This is an increase over the 2014 numbers (5,527), while the highest number of prisoners and detainees since the last round of conflict were in 2015 with 6,066 individuals held ("Statistics on Palestinians," 2018, graph 1).

**Prior to Summer 2014: A holding ceasefire and rising tensions.** 2013 was a relatively quiet year in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. The prior year concluded with an eight-day conflict between Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Hamas, ultimately resulting in a cease-fire agreement. This uneasy peace lasted for much of 2013, but by early 2014 the ceasefire had become shaky and the first sign of turbulence in thirteen months was becoming apparent. The tremors that shook spring continued into summer, which became a season of conflict and a period of unexpected media scrutiny; the following sections lay out how the media culture of Israel, paired with the evolving social media technologies, has not always fallen along the lines of peace journalism.

**Media in Israel.** The turbulence of Summer 2014 emphasized one element of Israel's democracy that many international audiences did not realize: The governmental

gag order. In regard to matters of the state and its security, Israel can (and has) placed official gag orders on media to prevent publication of certain details. During the Summer of 2014 this included information related to the disappearance of the three young men. Specifically, there was a gag order in place in regard to the supposed—and later confirmed—emergency call made by one of the teens that had to be cleared for publication (Haaretz.com, 2014a).

To understand specific nuances of this policy regarding the conflict of 2014 and the analysis of the Twitter moments to follow, this thesis must first explore the background that resulted in the policy. Unlike most modern democracies, Israel does not have a written constitution that secures freedom of press. In place of this separate written document, Israel's constitutional legalities work in accordance with an unwritten and uncoded constitution dictated by the Harari Decision, which created a series of basic laws that would work as individual chapters to serve as a constitution ("Harari Proposal Passes," 2016). Therefore, rather than having a concrete constitution, Israel's government consists of multiple constitutional laws that can be easily nullified by new laws. The current version of Israel's constitutional legalities contains fourteen laws—three of which were later nullified by the Supreme Court. None of the existing laws specifically mentions specific freedoms regarding the press or free speech.

It was not until 1953 when the Supreme Court of Israel set a precedent that would secure future rights of governmental gag orders imposed on media publications pertaining to the security of the state, allowing the state to limit or restrict speech if it poses a danger to public peace. Two newspapers with communist affiliation--the Hebrew Kol Ha'Am and Arabic Al Ittihad-published articles related that were deemed by Interior

Minister Israel Rokach to be a danger to public safety as they insinuated an anti-Soviet policy on the side of Israel, which resulted in a ten- and fifteen-day suspension for each paper, respectively. The fundamental factor at the heart of this case (as well as many that will follow) is the definition of “the relationship that exists between the right to freedom of the press on the one hand, and on the other, the power held by the authorities...to place a limit on the use of that right” (“Kol Ha’Am” Company Limited v. Minister of the Interior, 1953, p. 6). In a reference to the United States Supreme Court case *Schenck v. US*, it was stated by Judge Shimon Agranat in his delivery of the judgment of the court that

[T]he concern for preserving the security of the state in time of emergency is so liable to becloud all other considerations, that the authorities will be inclined, by dint of that concern, to prohibit or punish the making of statements or their written publication even at a time when they constitute no danger to the peace of the state or the nation ( “Kol Ha’Am” Company Limited v. Minister of the Interior, 1953, p. 12).

It is this concern for the security of the state that, over sixty years later, would result in a controversy regarding freedoms of speech and press, particularly in online environments. Though unknowable at the time of Agranat’s judgement, the court’s decision would become critical to unfolding events, beginning with the original emergency call (later leaked to the media) conveying that Frenkel, Shaer, and Yifrah had been kidnapped.

**Gag orders, social media, and Operation Brother's Keeper.** At approximately 10:25 PM on the night of June 12th, 2014, Gilad Shaer called the authorities to express that he—along with the two other young men—had been kidnapped (“Recording,” 2014). The twenty-two second call ends with a round of gunfire, leaving it to the listener’s imagination what the fate of these three young men may be. In line with Israeli policy,

this call was placed under gag order, making its content unpublishable and forbidden from discussion until the Israeli government said otherwise. However, prior to its official clearance by the Ministry of the Interior, the recording leaked, rapidly disseminating across social media and spreading across the country (Hartman, 2014).

But as war stories are now told in real time through hashtags, live streaming video, and blogs by rogue storytellers who may be deemed journalists simply because of their consistent use of the new technologies, it is worth wondering how the traditional mass media will implement these same tools into their trusted broadcasts. This is of special interest in regard to coverage of turbulent areas such the Middle East/North African region. In order to understand the possibilities, it is important to note what is social media, how it coincides with peace journalism, and its ever-present role in conflict.

### **The interconnectivity of social and mass medias**

**Definition of social media.** Boyd and Ellison (2008) define social media sites (SNSs) as online services that permit individual users to create a profile within a defined organization, allowing for connection to other users as well as cover not only their list of connections but also lists made by others in the site. Boyd and Ellison's interpretation of social media sites is supported by a similar definition generated by Kaplan and Haelein (2009) who define social media as a "group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow for the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (p. 61). This user-generated content (UGC) is what differentiates Web 1.0 from 2.0, as the latter that includes blogs, wikis, social networking sites, etc., while the former includes only personal, non-collaborative web pages. With Web 2.0, voices are no longer restricted to a single, relatively-static web



page; it includes fluid movement from one user's corner of the internet into another to a commonplace where their collective voices can cumulate. These dual definitions as put forth by Boyd and Haelein, then, include the widespread evolution of social networking technology, one that has pushed the boundaries of usage from simple peer-to-peer networking towards a larger scale interaction, affording opportunities for expression that had not previously existed; once such opportunity is the presentation of peace journalistic reporting through the burgeoning platforms.

**Social media and peace journalism.** Evolution in social media platforms has generated opportunities for citizen journalists to create their own publications, many of which have either intentionally or unintentionally incorporated tenants of peace journalism. A content analysis and a systematic network analysis of 145 blogs texts that were retrieved from a Google blogsearch exhibited more consistent application of peace journalism ideas than 407 articles from major national newspapers (such the New York Times and Washington Post), which tended to publish articles pertaining more to war journalism (Kim, Kwon, & Barnett, 2015).

These media outlets afford new opportunities for unheard or previously silenced voices to enter discussions related to peace through the evolution of citizen journalism. In his 2003 article, Lasica discusses the inclusion of blogs in the mainstream media, foreshadowing that there would be a "much larger role for amateurs in the news process" (Lasica, 2003, para. 25). Goode (2009) defines citizen journalism as "a range of web-based practices whereby 'ordinary' users engage in journalistic practices. Citizen journalism includes practices such as current affairs-based blogging, photo and video sharing, and posting eyewitness commentary on current events (p. 1288).

Simons (2016) discovered through an analysis of the grassroots group Ta'ayush that the group's work on Facebook and YouTube presented their publications as citizen journalism, much of which was focused on the violence encountered by Palestinians by Israelis living within the West Bank. Ta'ayush's publications have led to "significant local impact" (Simons, 2016, p. 35); in one particular case of a landowner, this online activism has led to the return of his land and demonstrating what good can occur from consistency and care is exhibited online. Social media's impact during moments of conflict do not always elicit positive change, however, and its role in conflict--from propaganda to requirement to retaliation--are only increasing and the technology evolves.

**Social media in conflict.** This risk for social media to result in negative consequences is already well-documented. Social media has been one of the most vital—if not the most important—weapon in ISIS's arsenal, such as using it for recruitment and propaganda. Brooking and Singer (2016) show that social media has created opportunities for ISIS to recruit no fewer than 30,000 fighters from roughly 100 countries to join them in their battles around Syria and Iraq (p. 72). The authors continue their allusion to the strength of social media in war, describing how ISIS utilizes the same online marketing techniques as Taylor Swift uses to sell her latest album by demonstrating viral successes and becoming infamous via social media.

The application of social media technology has not been purely negative; many groups and individuals use social media for the betterment of their communities who have faced war and armed conflict. For example, the development of "hashtag activism," a term first deployed in 2011 by the British outlet The Guardian, has allowed users to use cause-specific hashtags on the social media platform Twitter to promote positive

discussion concerning negative events (Augenbraun, 2011). One of the earliest examples of this evolving form of activism is *#Kony2012*, which brought attention to the crimes of Joseph Kony, leader of the Ugandan military group the Lord's Resistance (Weisman, 2012). Another strong example of this is the *#bringbackourgirls* campaign that filled Twitter with pleas to return the 276 young ladies that were kidnapped by the extremist group Boko Haram from their school in Chibok, Nigeria ("Nigeria says," 2014).

The specific metadata tag that pertains to this body of research is a simple one, written in pink highlighter on a remnant piece of white paper, secured to a door on Ben Yehuda Street in central Tel Aviv, corners curled ever slightly by the late June heat that made a simple request for Gilad, Naftali, Eyal: To *#BringBackOurBoys*. With the understanding of the historical context and of the interplay between social media and conflict, this thesis seeks to answer:

RQ1: In what ways did Israeli and Palestinian media outlets utilize Twitter during Operation Brother's' Keeper and what was the focus of these messages?

RQ2: How did tweets, if any, reflect the principles of war journalism and a divergence from peace journalism as discussed by Lynch and McGoldrick?

RQ2(a): In what ways were these messages congruent with the principles of peace journalism?

In the next sections, a qualitative analysis of Twitter usage by the two sides of this conflict will examine the multi-faceted approach to media these social media tools provide. This will include an examination of message content based on evident themes, how those messages aligned with peace journalism, and how—if at all—war journalism entered the scant 140 characters of the digital dialogue.

## **Methodology**

It is often stated that quality should be preferred over quantity. This adage is extremely suitable for communication over social media. The ability to not only send messages but to send them in bulk has been a mixed blessing of this medium, making it the perfect focus of a qualitative study, as it lends to the research a body information that can be sorted and filtered to locate concentrated communications. As stated by Jensen (2012), “[q]ualitative research...holds that certain phenomena calls for a research process that moves liberally between all the analytical levels to develop adequate analytical categories” (p. 288). When dealing with this much content on so few mediums, it is vital to discover the threads that weave an entity’s collective communication together, allowing the recipient to have clearer idea of what is being said and if these messages are fully conveying the true intent of the communicator.

Because of the need to understand how social media impacts communication, this thesis completes a qualitative analysis of messages disseminated through Twitter by six sources—three Israeli and three Palestinian—during the first stage of the 2014 conflict, Operation Brother's Keeper. Qualitative analysis was the method chosen to allow a deeper examination of the content of the message, allowing for further analysis utilizing peace journalism at a lens through which to examine the collection of messages. The purpose of this examination is to see whether the bulk message ability of social media is influencing the journalists’ adherence to peace journalism and is influencing the content of their mass messages.

## **Research Design**

Prior to the 1980s, researching communication qualitatively was often considered unscientific and a method of analysis that “limit[ed] itself to describing, rather than changing, predominant media and communicative practices” (Jensen, 2012, p. 265-266). Jensen further explains, however, that two important changes have arisen in the evolution of qualitative analysis: The blurring of the line between the arts and sciences has increased the discussion between the discourses of qualitative and quantitative analysis, and recent research and publications have developed set standards and procedures for qualitative research (p. 265). In addition to this developing validity of the method, Jensen (2012) also emphasizes how the emerging digital technologies provide “new challenges—and opportunities—for empirical research, specifically regarding the methods of data collection and analysis” (p.288). Taking advantage of these opportunities, qualitative research methods were applied to this body of research. The content analysis as provided by qualitative analysis provides the tools to examine each individual tweet to not only deduce how Twitter was used by individual resources, but also examine trends in usage on both side of the conflict; it also creates a body of data that allows for general strategies for use to be developed.

Since its inception in 2006, Twitter has found itself a place within academic research. Zimmer and Prefores discovered that between 2006 and 2012 there were 382 scholarly articles that used Twitter as the primary tool for data collection, and that these articles indicated trends in the growth of Twitter-based research (Zimmer & Prefores, 2014). Qualitative analysis has been applied to collected hashtags related to events and analyzed for their ability to facilitate discussion (O’Hallarn, Shapiro, Hambrick,

Wittkower, Ridinger, & Morehead, 2018; Borgmann, Wolem, Merseburger, Nestler, Salem, Brandt, Haferkamp, & Loeb, 2016).

The use of qualitative analysis in examinations of social media communications is not unprecedented. The aforementioned researchers Kaplan and Haenlin (2010) utilized qualitative analysis in their research regarding the practical applications of social media in the business world. Similar research was conducted by Briones, Kuch, Fisher Liu, and Jin (2011), who applied qualitative analysis to their analysis of the two-way dialogue created by social media between the American Red Cross and their audience. Briones et al (2011) stress in their research that the sample size generated for their study—as well as other qualitative analysis—is one of the limitations of the design that perhaps does not provide generalized results, but that is an appeal of the qualitative method for this body of research; this examines not a broad area or a broad concern, but rather the research focuses on a very tailored segment of journalism and its application on an evolving platform that increasingly is being used for new reporting.

### **Units of Analysis**

This thesis focuses on the content found in tweets surrounding Operation Brother's Keeper and the implication of these messages in relation to the basic tenants of peace journalism, a theory developed by Lynch and McGoldrick. The tweets studied in this analysis were first located through an advanced search on Twitter, which allowed for the return of all tweets (including retweets) that were completed for each account within a certain time frame. The time frame for this research was June 11 through July 7; these dates were chosen to include the entire duration of Operation Brother's Keeper (June 12 through July 8) as well as accounting for time zone changes created in the publication of

each analyzed tweet. Twitter was chosen because of its quick dissemination of information, as well as the fact that at the time of their publications, tweets were recorded by the Library of Congress, ensuring that a full archive of all pertinent tweets are available and that no postliminary edits were made by anyone attempting to alter the timeline of events and tweets. (Lohr, 2010). Three news sources were chosen to represent each side of the conflict. These sources were chosen because of their number of followers and their use of English.

The process for source selection began with a Google search for “Israel News Sources” and “Palestinian News Sources.” From these individual queries, a list was generated of potential option that met the following conditions:

- They had an active, accessible Twitter account that posted regularly (two or three times a week)
- Accounts had a substantial following (due to a lack of research that indicated any correlation between number of followers and credibility, it was determined that the accounts with the most followers would be selected).
- The messages there posted were in English.

Not vital to the search was whether or not the account was authenticated by Twitter (as denoted by a blue star with a checkmark). This data was recorded, however, in case it led to

Supplementary criteria were also developed, should these initial pieces be insufficient and yield a limited quantity of results:

- Additional search queries would be leverages (such as “West Bank News Sources,” “Jerusalem News Sources,” etc.)
- Queries would be made on the platform of Twitter itself to gauge what news sources are leveraging this media

The first two pages of Google search results were examined. For Israeli sources that list was populated by the following sources (their following counts were assessed on February 20, 2019):

- Arutz Sheva (@arutzsheva\_En); 30.1K; posts exclusively in English; not authenticated.
- Haaretz (@haaretzcom); 342K; posts exclusively in English; authenticated.
- The Jerusalem Post (@Jerusalem\_Post); 401K; posts exclusively in English; authenticated
- The Times of Israel (@TimesofIsrael); 237K; posts exclusively in English; authenticated
- YNetNews (@ynetnews); 43.3K; posts exclusively in English; authenticated.

For Palestinian sources, this process was repeated with zero results; there were no news sources that met the research criteria evident on the first pages of a Google query. In order to expand the search parameters a different query, “West Bank News Sources,” was attempted via Google. The results of this search presented a website entitled ABZY News Links that contained a collection of Palestinian news sources (“Palestinian Newspapers,” 2019). The following sources listed on that site met the criteria:



- Palestine News Network (@PNNEnglish); 3,871; posts exclusively in English; not authenticated.
- Palestine Journal (@PalestineNewz); 1,413; does not post exclusively in English; not authenticated.
- Ma'an News Agency (@MaanNewsAgency); 281K; posts exclusively in English; not authenticated.

In order to ensure that major sources for information were included in this study further research for possible sources was conducted on the platform of Twitter itself using the supplementary criteria. "Palestine" was the query used to search accounts to find potential new sources, with the following sources being discovered:

- ISM Palestine (@ISMPalestine); 62.2K; posts exclusively in English; not authenticated.
- Palestine Pulse (@PalestinePulse); 3,383; does not post exclusively in English, not authenticated.
- Palestine Today (@PalestineToday); 264K; posts exclusively in English; not authenticated.

Based in their completion of the criteria, six sources were chosen, three for Israel and three for Palestine; the choice of three on each side was determined based on the fact that there were limited Palestinian sources that met the criteria, and it was the thought of this researcher that it was best if the coverage examined was balanced. The Israeli sources were Haaretz (@haaretzcom), The Times of Israel (@TimesofIsrael), and Jerusalem Post (@Jerusalem\_Post); the Palestinian sources were ISMPalestine

(@ISMPalestine), Ma'an News Agency (@MaanNewsAgency), and Palestine Today (@PalestineToday).

## **Results**

The stories tweeted by the selected news outlets tell two individual narratives that emerged in the days between June 13 and July 7, 2014. While there are points of commonality between tweets from Israel and Palestine, the 140 characters used to tell each story reveal varying priorities in relation to the current events that would unfold and engulf the region during the summer of 2014. The following sub-sections will provide a macro assessment of these perspectives, establishing a baseline for further comparison in later sections.

### **Israeli Perspective**

Prior to the kidnapping of Fenkel, Shaer, and Yifrah, Twitter's Israeli news focused on the Tel Aviv Gay Pride Parade, David Blatt's relocation to Cleveland to coach the Cavaliers, and excitement surrounding the 2014 Men's World Cup. However, these topics were rapidly sidelined by the developing narrative of Operation Brother's Keeper that began at 7:26 AM on Friday, June 13, with 78 characters from the *Jerusalem Post*: "Israel launches massive manhunt for three youths feared kidnapped in West Bank" (The Jerusalem Post, 2014a). This was followed four minutes later at 7:30 AM, with Haaretz's first tweet about the topic, "Three teens missing, feared kidnapped in West Bank" (Haaretz.com, 2014b). At 7:43 AM, *the Times of Israel* began their coverage of the events by issuing their first tweet, "@IsraeliPM @Netanyahu says that he holds President #Abbas responsible for the well-being of the 3 students" (The Times of Israel, 2014a).

A preliminary analysis of nearly four thousand tweets from Israeli news organizations released between June 11 and July 8, 2014, revealed two primary categories of content for the Israeli tweets disseminated during Operation Brother's Keeper: Retaliation with Worry and Tension

**Retaliation.** After the initial news reports of the kidnapping during the morning of June 13, Israeli media outlets covered communications that asked for social and governmental retaliation against the kidnappers and their supporters; these calls were persistent, despite no official word as to who was responsible. *The Times of Israel* tweeted on the day of the events, June 13, that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu told then-Secretary of State John Kerry that “the feared kidnappings are because # Hamas enters gov[sic]” (The Times of Israel, 2014b). This is a reference to the unity deal between the group based in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank; this came within mere moments of a previous tweet labeled as an update and disseminated the story that Kerry had also called Abbas to discuss the day's events.

*Haaretz* did not follow the same trajectory as *The Times of Israel*; their only reference on the same day of the kidnapping referred to Tzipi Livni's request of John Kerry to approach Abbas about kidnapped teens (Haaretz.com, 2014c). While *Haaretz* did not explicitly reference the kidnapping on the day Naftali Fenkel, Gilad Shaer, and Eyal Yifrah were abducted, the news organization did make several tweets appearing to reference and build on the unfolding events. Within twenty-four hours of the kidnapping, *Haaretz* tweeted thrice that Hamas had called for a “new intifada against Israel” (Haaretz.com, 2014d; Haaretz.com 2014e, Haaretz.com, 2014f); this call was not

unprecedented, as most recent bouts of conflict include allusions to the previous two attempts by the Occupied Territories to dislodge Israel's occupation.

Despite this call for Palestinian action by Hamas, it was not until the following day that Haaretz tweeted anything placing blame. This coverage began with a statement that Netanyahu made, claiming that "the three teens were kidnapped by a terror organization" (Haaretz.com, 2014g). This was supplemented by messages that insinuated this event was a sign of the "real results of Palestinian unity government" (Haaretz.com, 2014h) and that "Hamas and Mahmoud Abbas are responsible for the fate" of the three teens; this latter sentiment was restated another time before the day's end. *Haaretz* also referenced other recent kidnapping attempts of Israelis conducted by Palestinians (Haaretz.com, 2014i). *Haaretz* also published an editorial where, according to the tweet, Netanyahu blames Abbas for the kidnapping (FYI, p. 240).

Unlike the preceding news outlets, the *Jerusalem Post* was relatively restricted in its coverage of the kidnappings and only posted one tweet related to John Kerry and his interactions with Livni and Abbas (The Jerusalem Post, 2014b). The first point of blame that is reported via Twitter from the *Jerusalem Post* was a tweet focused on the findings of a report that claimed "Israel Police failed to notify security forces of kidnapping" (The Jerusalem Post, 2014c). Therefore, the first accusation by this outlet was that these actions taken by the kidnappers were acts of war against Israel—and only Israel.

**Worry and tension** As June progressed from the early hours of Friday, June 13 deeper into the month, so did the news coverage from the concrete to the speculative; this often left room for the Israeli outlets to allow their tweets to touch on the emotional side of this event.

On June 22, *The Times of Israel* simply tweeted “Holding our breath” (The Times of Israel, 2014c) with a link to a blog written by a bioethics student Corinne Berzon, who discussed her guilt in living and moving on while these three young men remain “stolen” (Berzon, 2014, para. 6). On June 23, there was also a tweet regarding a crowdfunding event that raised money for leads (The Times of Israel, 2014d) as well as additional messages that discusses “[w]hat Israel is allowed to do” (The Times of Israel, 2014e) and what exactly the public has the right to know about the events (The Times of Israel, 2014f). A tweet on June 24 states that the IDF chief claims that “[a]s time passes, the fear grows” (The Times of Israel, 2014g), representing the holding pattern the search for the young men, as well as the coverage of their disappearance, was in during the middle of the operation.

Much like *The Times of Israel*, *Haaretz* put additional emphasis on the worry facing the nation. Many of the tweets that are serving as updates to the IDF activity include phrasing that denote how long this operation has been ongoing; for example. On June 21 *Haaretz* tweeted that IDF troops searched the West Bank communities of Hebron and El Bireh “as search for kidnapped teens enters day 9” (Haaretz.com, 2014j).

*Haaretz* also used Twitter to push articles that included a cynical approach to coverage. A tweet from June 21 promoted an article written by *Haaretz*’s Middle Eastern affairs analyst Zvi Bar’el that Israel may not have direct evidence of Hamas’ involvement in the abduction (Haaretz.com, 2014k). On this same day, *Haaretz* tweeted an article that quoted Abbas and his assertion that this kidnapping has occurred in a portion of the West Bank that is under Israeli control (Haaretz.com, 2014l). A tweet from June 22 indicates a similarly negative tone in its claim that readers and followed should not “expect a happy

ending from Israel's West Bank operation" (Haaretz.com, 2014m). In these series of tweets, *Haaretz* utilized the medium to not dispel fear or worry, but instead to cast a more pessimistic light onto the events of Operation Brother's Keeper.

Unlike other outlets, the *Jerusalem Post* focused their tweets on information related to the Occupied Territories. On June 20, it was tweeted that "Palestinians on social media scorn Abbas for aiding Israel in search for teens" (The Jerusalem Post, 2014d). On the same day, another tweet provided a link to a video that showed a CNN cameraman being assaulted during a rally supporting Hamas (The Jerusalem Post, 2014e). The following day the *Jerusalem Post* sent a tweet that linked to a photo gallery which demonstrated how the Gaza Strip "simmers with tension as Israel sets sights on Hamas" (The Jerusalem Post, 2014f). June 22 saw a tweet that promoted an opinion piece by Alexander Yakobson that was a rebuttal to a column written by Israeli-Arab writer Sayed Kashua; this rebuttal that explained how there would "no longer be two peoples in this land" but rather one state that "won't be Israel" (Yakobson, 2014, para. 8). On June 23, there was a photo gallery promoted via Twitter that showed various *Jerusalem Post* demonstrating their support for the missing boys (The Jerusalem Post, 2014g). For this outlet, it was important to disseminate messages of tensions related to Palestine rather than those that pertain directly to the internal worry of the three missing teens.

### **Palestinian Perspective**

In stark contrast to the Israeli reporting of pride parades and World Cup coverage prior to Operation Brother's Keeper, Palestinian sources were devoted to far more serious concerns. Replacing rainbow banners were signs signaling a fuel shortage in the Gaza strip; nowhere were people celebrating soccer, but rather discussing ethics related to

force-feeding Palestinian prisoners on hunger strikes. News before the operation generated a stark contrast in priorities, which was nothing like the coverage that would soon follow.

Initial content analysis of the tweets from Palestinian sources revealed four themes under which the majority of the messages related to the actions of Operation Brother's Keeper fall: The cost of occupation, collective punishment, settlers, and Palestinian casualties.

**Response to kidnapping.** *Ma'an News Agency* broke the news on the Palestinian side on the day of the kidnapping, June 13, with a breaking news alert that the "Israeli army confirms they are currently searching for 3 missing settlers in West Bank" (Ma'an News Agency, 2014a). Two days later, on June 15, *Palestine Today* announced the kidnapping for the first time in a tweet focused on IDF's arrest of 80 Palestinians "in response to teens' kidnapping" (Palestine Today, 2014a). *ISM Palestine* made no reference to the kidnapping until June 18, with a tweet referencing a joint press release from several human right groups, stating that "Israel's search for settlers led to collective punishment" (ISM Palestine, 2014a). This lone tweet was supplemented on June 21 with a report that was tweeted with the question "How many Palestinians will die in search for missing Israeli youth?" (ISM Palestine, 2014b).

**The cost of occupation.** As Operation Brother's Keeper continued, a common theme related to the search for the three teens related to the idea that this was an effect of the settlements. *Palestine Today* emphasized this sentiment in a tweet that linked to a "[m]ainstream piece" that places the "settler teen abduction at feet of 'illegal' and 'indefensible' occupation" (Palestine Today, 2014b). *ISM Palestine* tweeted on June 18

that “Israel greenlights construction of 172 illegal settler homes in Jerusalem” (ISM Palestine, 2014c). On June 24, Palestinian Today disseminated a tweet that contained a link to an article by a user with the handle @Experience\_Cody that “‘It’s not Hamas, it’s the Illegal[sic] Settlements” (Palestine Today, 2014).

**Collective punishment.** A common bond between the three Palestinian news outlets was the belief that collective punishment for all Palestinians was a likely Israeli response in the search for the kidnapped teens. *Ma’an News Agency* was the first to mention collective punishment in a tweet on June 15 where the Palestinian Authority fully concluded that Israel was punishing all Palestinians because of the actions of a few (Ma’an News Agency, 2014b). This source reiterated these assertions in another tweet on June 17 where it was messaged a second time that Israel was using “‘collective punishment’ in search for teens” (Ma’an News Agency, 2014c). As Operation Brother's Keeper was coming to a close, *ISMPalestine* tweeted that “[t]he international community must speak out about the murders & collective punishment of Palestinians #PalUnderAttack” (ISM Palestine 2014d); this outlet supplemented itself with another tweet on July 2 that quoted Amnesty International that there is “[n]o justice in Israel’s collective punishment” (ISM Palestine, 2014e). A clear concern of Palestinians during this time was not if the punishment fit the crime, but rather why all individuals were being punished because of the actions of a few.

**Settlers, not teenagers.** Throughout many of the tweets disseminated by Palestinian sources, the three young men were referred to often as “settlers” as opposed to Israelis, Jewish, or even teenagers. *ISM Palestine* made reference to the young men in



settlers in the aforementioned tweet on June 18 (ISM Palestine 2014a); a second tweet on that day addresses them as such again (ISM Palestine, 2014f).

Like *ISM Palestine*, *Ma'an News Agency* addressed the missing young men as settlers in the early days of coverage; the first four tweets from June 13 mention the teenagers as settlers, and it was not until June 14 that this source addressed them as teenagers (Ma'an News Agency, 2014a; Ma'an News Agency, 2014d; Ma'an News Agency, 2014e). After these specific uses of the term "settler," it is limited to use in addressing the whole of those who live inside the green line, rather than just the three missing young men.

*Palestine Today* used "settlers" in regards to the three missing teens the least of the three outlets, addressing them as settlers twice. The first mention was in reference to a "mainstream piece" where it addresses the events as the "settler teen abduction" (Palestine Today, 2014d). The second incident of the user of "settler" was in one of the final tweets of the operation; it was related to the supposed revenge murder of Mohammed Abu Khdeir, an action "seen as revenge attack for settlers' murder" as quoted in the snippet from a retweeted al Jazeera article (Palestine Today, 2014e; "Palestinian teen's," 2014).

### **Application of peace journalism principles**

To analyze the collection of tweets accumulated between the chosen dates, Lynch and McGoldrick's (2005) points used to identify Peace Journalism were utilized. The duo present through their book seventeen suggestions that would help "re-balance the reporting of conflicts" (p. 29). This would, according to the authors, challenge the impact of War Journalism.

The seventeen points are as follows:

1. Avoid portraying a conflict as consisting of only two parties contesting the same goal or goals, as this creates an automatic winner and loser.
2. Avoid accepting stark distinctions between *self* and *other*, as these can create a sense that the other party is a threat.
3. Avoid treating conflicts as if they are only going on in the place and at the time that the violence is occurring.
4. Avoid assessing the merits of a violent action/policy in terms of its obvious effects.
5. Avoid letting parties define themselves by quoting their leaders' statements, demands, and positions.
6. Avoid concentrating on what divides parties or on what they say they want.
7. Avoid only reporting on and describing the violent acts and horrors of war.
8. Avoid blaming someone for starting the conflict.
9. Avoid focusing solely on the grievances of only one party, as this divides parties.
10. Avoid victimizing language, as it only tells what has been done or could be done.
11. Avoid using emotive words to describe what has happened.
12. Avoid objectives that demonize another party.
13. Avoid using demonizing labels (such as "terrorist").

14. Avoid focusing on the human rights violations of just one side.
15. Avoid making an opinion sound like a proven fact.
16. Avoid turning the cessation of violence into the creation of peace.
17. Avoid waiting for leaders of the reporter's side to suggest solutions.

These seventeen points will be used to examine communications from each Twitter handle. However, due to their expansive breadth of coverage, these points have been consolidated into four themes that will serve as the tool to investigate the use of peace journalism in tweets disseminated by the selected news outlets.

The process of consolidating these seventeen points began with a close reading of each point where the main idea was determined. These main ideas were pulled out of context of the main point and used to populate and create a list. After this new list was completed, it was compared to Table 1 in the appendix that compares and contrasts war journalism and peace journalism; the goal of this comparison was to see how the wording of these truncated seventeen points was similar to the wording of the table to see if there was any potential for categories. There were some strong similarities, and therefore these categories of table 1 were leverage as the initial categories for the seventeen points.

The items of this list were then written onto index cards and placed onto a corkboard (so all could be seen at once and were moveable). The objective of this activity was to see how (if at all) these newly minted list items would fall into the previously mentioned traits of war versus peace journalism (in table 1 of the appendix); this would serve to group into potential categories for analysis.

The results of this activity did adequately divide the seventeen points into four categories related to war versus peace journalism<sup>2</sup>. Each point was then revisited in full context in the original seventeen points of peace journalism to determine what appropriate name could be given to each category; these categories were very much inspired by the dichotomies created in table 1 of the appendix, as they allowed cohesive categorization. These condensed themes are: Semantics (inspired by the focus of elite-oriented vs. people-oriented), divisional reporting (related to violence-oriented vs. conflict-oriented), subjective coverage (based on propaganda-oriented vs. truth-oriented), and resolution-centered reporting (much like victory-oriented vs. solution-oriented).

To begin this analysis, tweets from the six selected sources were procured utilizing Twitter's advanced search option, which allowed for the return of all tweets and retweets from each source during only the desired times. For the purpose of this research, the dates of June 12 through July 8, 2014 were selected, to be certain to account for time zone differences (these tweets were published under UTC +02:00, while they were retrieved under UTC-06:00). The tweets were saved as portable document format (PDF) files, with tweets organized from most recent to oldest (the default organization of Twitter's advanced search). Retweets were included in this body of evidence as they serve to either support or contradict the message from its original sender.

After securing the selected tweets, a system for analysis was developed in the creation of the four aforementioned categories. Upon the creation of these categories, each tweet was analyzed based on its content to determine which category they would fit

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<sup>2</sup> The grouping of these truncated points into these categories can be seen in table 2 of the appendix.

into best. Not unexpectedly, tweets could easily be categorized into more than one of the four divisions; however, to reduce the complexity of the analysis, each tweet was restricted to one primary category based on the content of its 140 characters.

Sorting content among the four categories was performed through a close reading of each tweet and assessing their connections to the seventeen points discussed by Lynch and McGoldrick (2005). This close reading revealed key elements to look for while reading tweets, such as:

- Quotes from leaders
- Labels for people (Israeli, Palestinian, settlers, terrorists, etc.)
- Descriptive words that favor/point fingers at one side or another
- Opinion pieces
- Demands or ultimatums

Once these key elements were determined, each of the six sources were read thoroughly. Tweets were highlighted if they contained one of the key elements. If a tweet contained items that went against the seventeen points, they were marked with a red check to denote their negativity; any positive tweet that would be seen as authentic peace journalism were marked with a green check mark.

After each of the tweets from the six accounts were read and sorted the marked tweets then were filed under the appropriate category. Tweets that could fall under multiple categories were chosen for their strongest one, determined by the intended purpose of the original tweet; these messages were examined a second to understand the message and audience as the deciding factor as to what category would be the best fit.

Once the most appropriate collection of tweets was compiled, analysis could begin to see how these news outlets utilized the relatively new tool for informing their audiences of breaking news. An overwhelming number of tweets categorized were contrary to the tenants of peace journalism. To introduce its use and understand its effectiveness as a journalistic tool during conflict, then, the first aspect to examine is not peace journalism, but the inverse: War Journalism.

**Semantics.** A close reading of the seventeen points of peace journalism reveal that several relate directly to word choice in reporting (specifically points ten, eleven, twelve, and thirteen). Once grouped, it can be seen that peace journalism emphasizes the avoidance of terms that could be seen as inciting and triggers towards violence.

*The Times of Israel*, through a selection of tweets, violates this category on several occasions throughout the conflict, primarily by going against the direction of point 13 (demonizing labels) on three occasions, the outlet addresses Palestinian entities as “terrorists” (The Times of Israel, 2014g; The Times of Israel, 2014i; The Times of Israel, 2014j). It is in this same sentiment that *Jerusalem Post* addressed the prisoners freed in the Gilad Shalit exchange as the “terrorists freed” in that transaction (The Jerusalem Post, 2014h).

It may be wondered what term could be the equivalent of “terrorist” from Palestinian outlets; by examining context created with the 140 characters of a tweet, it can be deduced that the demonizing labels used to describe Israelis during Operation Brother’s Keeper is the term “settler.” In their tweet that broke the news of the kidnapping, *Ma’an News Agency* confirmed that the IDF was “searching for 3 missing settlers in the West Bank,” attracting no attention to the fact that two of the were under

the age of 18 (Ma'an News Agency, 2014f). Many tweets from the three outlets apply the term "settler" to describe those that live within the West Bank; while not an incorrect term, its usage is often unflattering, and can be seen as label used to create divisions rather than bridge them.

Much in the same vein is the use of demonizing adjectives, as utilized by *ISM Palestine* and *Palestine Today*. In quoting a Turkish doctor, *ISM Palestine* was able to refer to the actions that lead to a Palestinians prisoner's death as "torture" (ISM Palestine, 2014g). This aligns with point 10 (victimizing language); *Ma'an News Agency* has violated this point in addressing the Twittersphere by using the term "brutalized" to describe a teen that had been beaten by police (Ma'an News Agency, 2014f). This teen, fifteen-year-old Palestinian-American Tarek Abu Khdeir, was one of eleven that had been beaten and arrested, and the assault against him was filmed and uploaded to YouTube on the channel operated by *Palestine Today* ("Israel Orders," 2014, para. 13 and 14).

It is the words chosen to describe the people and events that reveal unchallenged war journalism. These semantics in turn leave little room for discourse to promote the use of peace journalism. From these unresolved challenges comes greater concerns in the coverage of conflict. That concern can be categorized as divisional reporting.

**Divisional reporting.** Peace journalism argues that conflict cannot be covered in terms of sides, but rather in the "focus of suffering all over" (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p. 6). Four of the points at the heart of peace journalism—one, two, six, and eight—calls on journalists to avoid reporting that risks widening divides between people. However,

analysis of the tweets surrounding Brother' Keeper demonstrate that these tenants of peace journalism are not always heeded.

Further analysis demonstrates that peace journalism's opposing of divisiveness was also often violated during the course of this conflict. Lynch and McGoldrick's first point (avoiding conflicts as two parties with one contested goal) illustrates how divisional reporting can perpetuate an "us vs. them" scenario; instead of focusing on conflict as a win-lose scenario, the point promotes disaggregation, or the breaking of one or two groups into many with varied interests (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p. 28). For example, by reporting that Israel could kill the Hamas leaders very early into the conflict, *The Times of Israel* props up animosity, pitting one group against the other and indicating that killing is always already an option (The Times of Israel, 2014k). Illustrating further aggregation of groups was another tweet supplied by *The Times of Israel* on June 26, where the newspaper reported that that one group, the Arabs, has "menace[d]" Jewish citizens, on Temple Mount (The Times of Israel, 2014l). Adding to this tense exchange, *Haaretz* followed suit shorter afterward, calling for a third Intifada against Israel (Haaretz.com, 2014n). *ISM Palestine* then further escalated tensions, tweeting claims that IDF soldiers had published images online that called for the murder of Arabs (ISM Palestine, 2014h). By reporting that each side of this conflict was attempting to exterminate the other, these outlets widened the space in conflict and promoted ideas akin to war journalism and less reflective of peace journalism.

In addition to keeping conflicts from becoming an *us vs. them* scenario, Lynch and McGoldrick's provide journalist with a sixth point avoiding fixation on what divides the parties involved in conflict and instead encouraging focus on points of commonality.



This trend is demonstrated through tweets from two sources, one on each side, and each instance occurred near the end of the conflict. On June 29, *Haaretz* thrice published the results of a poll showing that Palestinians “overwhelmingly” reject the idea of a two-state solution, and rather desired a Palestinian state ““from river to sea”” (Haaretz.com, 2014o; “Poll,” 2014). Likewise, *ISMPalestine* tweeted their support of the United States’ Presbyterian Church’s decision to support the Boycott-Divest-Sanction (BDS) movement against Israel, first mentioning the initial vote of the Presbyterian Church on June 21, following it with a request for *ISMPalestine* followers to thank the churches on June 23 (ISM Palestine 2014i; ISM Palestine 2014j). In a similar manner, *ISMPalestine* tweeted a story concerning protests the closing of a SodaStream store in the United Kingdom, again using the metadata tag *#BDS* (ISM Palestine, 2014k); SodaStream is an Israeli-owned company that has a manufacturing plant in Jewish settlements in the West bank, and has frequently come under ridicule and protests for their work within the occupied territory (Savitsky, 2017). These three examples of media outlets continuing to fissure rather than fuse with their eye on the differences restricts their ability to implement principles of peace journalism.

Similar to the first and sixth points which stress an avoidance of creating two parties and dividing them is point eight (avoid placing blame for starting the conflict). Prior to the publication of conclusive answers, and even before the three young men had been found, *The Times of Israel* named the two primary suspects, both of whom were attached to Hamas (The Times of Israel, 2014l). In the article linked via the tweet, the mother of Amer Abu Aysha, one of the aforementioned suspects, stressed that if her son had indeed participated in these events, she would feel a sense of pride and would hope

for his continued evasion of the authorities (The Times of Israel, 2014m; Issacharoff & Sterman, 2014). The direct mention of suspects (and the response of the mother) serves as another example of how this media outlet used Twitter to place or emphasize blame.

Looking deeper into how organizations assigned blame rather than focusing on shared problems and solutions, it is further evident that news outlets did not successfully work toward mediation or resolution. On June 18, *Jerusalem Post* tweeted a speculation that the kidnapping was spurred by a speech given by Hamas's Khaled Mashaal, where he proclaimed that Israeli-held prisoners' hardships would be eased by Izzadin Kassam, the military wing of the organization, if they reciprocated and held Israelis captive (The Jerusalem Post, 2014i). An emphasis on who may be responsible for the rise of the conflict continued well into the operation. On June 22, *Jerusalem Post* tweeted back-to-back tweets that did not address a "shared problem" (Lynch & McGolrick, 2005, p. 29), but rather continued an expressed division that indicated conflict. The first of these tweets contained a video that showed the IDF finding a weapons cache during their search in the West Bank (The Jerusalem Post, 2014j); the second tweet warned of Hamas's plan for a third intifada as these West Bank raids continued (The Jerusalem Post, 2014k). While not directly vocalizing blame, each message does place responsibility of current and future, potential violence on Hamas rather than seeing and examining how these situations are products of an unintended escalation on each side.

This divisional reporting, whether intentional or consequential, makes it clear that the ideas put forth by peace journalism were not adhered to through this selection of tweets. Unfortunately, they serve not only as divisive messages, but also as beginning

link in the chain of causation that leads to another action more akin to war journalism than its reconciliatory counterpart: Subjective coverage.

**Subjective coverage.** Points seven, nine, fourteen, and seventeen focus on the issue of one-sided coverage, specifically on the need to avoid reporting only “our” side. Two particularly emphasized points in this category are points seven (avoidance in reporting only the violence) and nine (avoidance of placing focus upon the suffering and grievances of one side); out of the four points within this category, these two received the majority of the tweets that pointed towards subjective coverage.

Within days of the kidnapping, Haaretz violated point nine with a report that reminded their audience of previous kidnapping attempts against “of Israelis in the West Bank” (Haaretz.com, 2014p). This tweet was supplemented the next day (June 15) with a tweet against point nine that promoted “[r]ound-the-clock updates” related to the search for the missing teens, illustrating only side of this conflict. One week into the search for the missing teens, *Jerusalem Post* went against point seven by covering a story where a CNN reported had been assaulted by Palestinian Authority police for filming a pro-Hamas rally (The Jerusalem Post, 2014l); this can be seen as stressing only the violence of the gathering rather than its purpose or intent. By stressing only the violence and injustice of one side, the side opposite to their position, these sources can be seen as serving as war journalism more than peace.

*ISMPalestine* consistently violated points seven and nine through their coverage of the 2014 round of conflict. A prime example of this trend is the repeated use of *#GazaUnderAttack*, which appeared 45 times from its first usage on June 30 to the end of the search period. In consistently using this hashtag, *ISMPalestine* is addressing not only

a single side as being under attack, but also a specific audience looking for only that chaos. This metadata tag campaign complimented a previous 26 usages of *#BringBackOurBoys*. Usage of these metadata tags far exceeded usage of *#BringBackOurBoys* that appeared in the Israeli sources; *Haaretz* utilized it twice, *Jerusalem Post* leveraged it five time, and *The Times of Israel* tagged 23 posts. While this thesis does not focus on the use of metadata tags exclusively, it is noteworthy that one side began to leverage the tags used by the other during the course of this conflict.

In addition to the use of audience-specific hashtags, *ISMPalestine* presented the most graphic information and images out of all the accounts, frequently using violent images with their tweets. This ranged from images of Palestinian protestors and prisoners (ISM Palestine, 2014l) to photographs of homes that had been raided by the IDF (ISM Palestine, 2014m) to pictures of the deceased (ISM Palestine, 2014n). While these images were not fundamentally inappropriate for media coverage, their usage is in violation of the tenants of peace journalism, as the images are not only of violent acts, but are also centered on only one side of the conflict.

The imbalance of coverage of this conflict is problematic regarding the major principles of journalism; however, it is great disregard to peace journalism. Not only was coverage on Twitter been teetering on the edge of war journalism, but it also had prevented a major aspect of peace journalism from occurring: Resolution-centered reporting.

**Resolution-centered reporting.** One of the primary aspects of peace journalism that distinguishes the approach from war journalism is its being solution-oriented, as opposed to victory-oriented. Peach journalism argues that the focus of the journalist

should rest in their ability to focus on the aftermath of conflict, such as “resolution, reconstruction, [and] reconciliation” (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p. 6). Points three, four, five, fifteen, and sixteen pay attention to this ambition.

Out of all the tenants of peace journalism, point five (avoidance in defining parties through quotes from leaders or restatements of demands) was the most violated by the Israeli news sources, who frequently used their 140 characters to quote those leading the country as well as the search for the young men. Early in the search for the missing teenagers, the Israeli sources often quoted Netanyahu, which would form the body of the tweet. This first occurred with *The Times of Israel* on June 14 when it was tweeted that “Netanyahu confirms: ‘Our boys were kidnapped by a terrorist organization’” (The Times of Israel, 2014n); a similar style of tweet was sent the following day on June 15 when *The Times of Israel* stated “Netanyahu: Hamas behind kidnapping of three teenagers” (The Times of Israel, 2014o). *Haaretz* also violated point five with a series of tweets from June 16 where the entirety of three consecutive messages consisted of only a quote by Prime Minister Netanyahu, who had given a press conference earlier in the day (Haaretz.com, 2014q; Haaretz.com, 2014r; Haaretz.com, 2014s). These three tweets were followed by yet another message where only the Israel Defense Minister Moshe Ya’alon was quoted saying that “Hamas will pay heavy price for kidnapping” (Haaretz.com, 2014s). By becoming a mouthpiece for their leaders, these news sources have inadvertently taken sides, reducing the likelihood of reporting with a resolution in mind.

Also detracting from reporting without a resolution in mind is reporting that stray from/avoids the known truths of the conflict; the fifteenth point of peace journalism focuses on resolution-centered reporting by stressing an avoidance on making

claims/opinions sounds factual and truthful. In several cases, this occurred on both sides of Operation Brother's Keeper. On two occasions *Palestine Today* tweeted articles that addressed Israel's role in the kidnapping, with one citing the illegal settlements as the reason for the kidnapping and the other claiming that the reader needs to "[s] Pretending Israel's crackdown has anything to do with the missing teens (Palestine Today, 2014f; Palestine Today 2014g); there is no disclaimer or label that identifies these are strictly opinion pieces. This was not a one-sided situation, as *Haaretz* applied a similar tactic in a tweet from June 26 that simply stated that "Israel mustn't negotiate with terrorist – even for the kidnapped boys" (Haaretzcom, 2014t). Without explicitly stating the quote source or that the linked article is an opinion, these sources have created a situation of ambiguity, leaving their readers and followers alone to interpret what is meant with potentially volatile and inciting information.

One such possible act of incitement occurred in the early morning hours of July 2, 2014, when a group of Israeli settlers kidnapped and murdered 16-year-old Palestinian Mohamad Abu Khdeir to avenge the deaths of Yifrach, Shaar, Fraenkel (Dearden & Lynfield, 2014). Occuring just one day after the fate of the three missing Israeli teens was known, this event—one of the final of Operation Brother's Keeper—presented the opportunity for peace journalism coverage. Some sources took the opportunity to present that variety of coverage; others, however, receded further into war journalism coverage.

### **Tweets Affirming Peace Journalism**

While the bulk of messages analyzed were closely related to war journalism, this was not to say the research shows an absence of peace journalism. In some instances, the researched news outlets did embrace the seventeen points and these tweets were marked

with a green checkmark during analysis. A list was formed for each source that compiled the marked tweets. Those lists formed the answer to part b of RQ2.

According to this researcher's close reading and analysis, the outlet that leverage peace journalism most frequently was The Times of Israel. Their coverage during the course of the three weeks did not solely encompass stories that could be categorized as war journalism. They tweeted about stories that discussed the dangers of the occupation (TimesOfIsrael, 2014p); this served to highlight the frustrations of Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories, a trait of peace journalism stressed in point seven (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p.29). The Times of Israel also covered situations of coexistence and seeing one another in themselves as explained in point two, specifically thought a tweet that explained how both Muslims and Jews together gathered in prayer at the kidnapping site and another that contained a "#picoftheday": A Jewish woman and Muslim woman, sitting together on a bench (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p.29; The Times of Israel, 2014q; The Times of Israel, 2014r).

This togetherness was furthered by Israeli outlets and their coverage of the death of Abu Khdeir and their reports of how family members of the kidnapped Israelis responded to this violence. Multiple tweets from The Times of Israel leveraged quotes from family members of Yifrach, Shaar, Fraenkel (The Times of Israel, 2014s; The Times of Israel, 2014t). Similar sentiments were tweeted by both *Haaretz* and *The Jerusalem Post* who both tweeted articles centered around Rachel Fraenkel, mother of kidnapped Naftali, and her condemnation of the murder of Abu Khdeir (Haaretz, 2014u; Jerusalem\_Post, 2014m). These examples fall right in line the eighth point of peace journalism: Looking at shared problems and their consequences (Lynch & McGoldrick,

2005, p.29). In giving a voice to the family of Israeli victims to express their shared grief and compassion, these media outlets are promoting peace journalism in their tweets.

This voice, or any voice that would move towards peace, was silent in the Palestinian sources; a close reading of *ISM Palestine*, *Ma'an News Agency*, and *Palestine Today* did not reveal an instance of the use of peace journalism. If anything, there seemed to be a greater shift towards war journalism. In the days following the fallout from the four deaths (Yifrach, Shaar, Fraenkel, and Abu Khdeir), tweets from *ISM Palestine* ranged from quotes from the family accusing Israel of covering up the murder to questioning whether or not Israel was going to demolish the homes of Jew who commit violence to saying that citizens who “tweet and/or pray for #Gaza tonight, rage for Gaza tomorrow” (ISM Palestine, 2014o; ISM Palestine, 2014p; ISM Palestine, 2014q).

This was not unlike the coverage of *Ma'an News Agency*, who also did not leverage tgheir tweets to convey messages of peace; furthermore, a few of their messages were not matched with appropriate responses that would move the dialogue towards peaceful means. For example, *Ma'an News Agency* tweeted on July 7 that Abbas “demands Netanyahu condemn kidnapping, killing of Palestinian” (Ma'an News Agency, 2014h); On July 2, Netanyahu ordered a “swift investigation” into the kidnapping/murder, and the next day condemned it (Haaretz, 2014v; The Times of Israel, 2014u). By not reporting both reponses, *Ma'an News Agency* is keeping their coverage one-sided and tilted towards war journalism.

It is the belief of this researcher that there was reasonable expectation that these sources would tilt in opposite directions as tensions began to rise, as Operation Brother's Keeper would wind down and Operation Protective Edge would rev up. With the



revelation that the three kidnapped Israelis had in fact been murdered, the threat of war went from being a possibility to immanent. For the citizens of Gaza, this no doubt meant a legitimate worry for violence, a worry this region knows too well.

The research of Wolfsfeld, Frosh, and Awabdy (2008) explain an ethnocentric flow of information, which has two possible directions in reporting: Victim mode or defensive mode. The victim mode provides coverage that is highly emotive and meant to elicit dramatic responses to the coverage, while defensive is more matter-of-fact in their coverage, as if to justify or rationalize the violence (Wolfsfeld et al, 2008, p. 403). In their research, which examined the coverage of death during the Second Intifada by specifically examining coverage of two acts of violence (the 2002 Pat Junction suicide bus bombing that killed 19 Israelis and the killing of Hamas Leader Sheik Saleh Shehadeh, his wife, and 16 civilians), Wolfsfeld, Frosh, and Awabdy discovered a critical difference between the two groups when faced with similar grievances:

It is interesting to think about the fact that, unlike the Israeli Victims story about Pat, the Palestinian story about Shehadeh does not focus on grieving families or specific communities. The language and the symbols that are employed all emphasize the national dimension rather than the personal one. The very fact that the victims are considered *Shahids* transforms them into national symbols and effectively removes them from their personal surroundings. This suggests that there are different ways of expressing ethnic solidarity and that a mobilized press may be more likely to construct a national narrative rather than a more individualistic or personal one. (Wolfsfeld et al, 2008, 414-415).

This elevation of their deaths to a propaganda-like status was again evident twelve years later in 2014 during Operation Brother's Keeper. *ISM Palestine* went as far as to call those that had perished in attacks on Gaza "martyrs" in one tweet (ISM Palestine, 2014r). The coverage provided by *ISM Palestine* matched nearly perfectly with the same description Wolfsfeld, Frosh, and Awabdy provided of Shehadeh's funeral: Full of

Palestinian national iconography (ISM Palestine, 2014s-w; Wolfsfeld et al, 2008, 414). In the grieving face of war, Palestinian see themselves not as individuals Palestinians, but rather one Palestine.

## **Discussion**

This study suggests that during the 2014 Israel-Gaza Conflict, the practical application of peace journalism by the media in two sides did not occur with the use of Twitter. Several key findings emerged from this qualitative analysis that have implications both directly related to Operation Brother's Keeper and, more broadly, related to the general communication practice by mass communication outlets leveraging Twitter in this news distribution.

First, this thesis' study of Operation Brother's Keeper demonstrate that the brevity of posts and message disseminated through Twitter may fundamentally impact the ability to leverage peace journalism. At the time this research began, Twitter was restricted to only 140 characters per message; it has since been boosted to 280 (Newton, 2017). Even with this increase, the character count allows for only a brief glimpse into the topic discussed or link via the message; this does not provide enough detail for a thorough explanation of what is contained. While this itself is not a concern in regard to most tweets, ones that deal with sensitive information are in a different category. When consuming news via Twitter, it cannot be assumed that the audience will click and leave the platform to read further; this leaves the audience with only the information presented in the initial tweet. If that information is tilted towards journalism, that is the angle that the audience will carry with them when they do ultimately leave and discuss outside of the platform.

This brevity of messages, especially regarding time-sensitive material, is a supplemental concern with this first finding. The research of Petrovic, Osborne, McCreadie, Macdonald, Ounis, and Shrimpton (2013) indicated that Twitter can present breaking news before that of the traditional news cycle in addition to expanding coverage of hyper-local news (p. 716). In a situation escalating quickly, this leaves a narrow margin for the presentation of peace journalism in news reports.

A second finding of this research is that the uncensored nature of social media allows for greater shock in coverage, which is a divergence from the purpose of peace journalism. In many instances during this research regarding Operation Brother's Keeper, tweets were accompanied by images, some of which were graphic in nature. Such graphic material that was included were: Images of deceased soldiers and citizens, infographics, and colored coded messages. The ability to include supplemental media in a Twitter post increases the opportunity to incorporate material that can incite rather than detract from any progression towards peace, and it can do so quickly.

The use of photographs to build frames for both war and peace journalism is not a new revelation with the onset of news coverage via social media. Fahmy and Neumann examined a similar concept in 2012 when they analyzed the use of photographs by three major news newswires (Associated Press, Reuters, and American Free Press/Getty Images) in terms of their use towards peace journalism during the 2008-2009 conflict in Gaza. The results of their study indicated that each of the three newswires leveraged frames pertaining to war journalism more frequently than that of peace journalism, and that "the visual coverage in terms of war journalism versus peace journalism played a rather complementary than competitive role" (Fahmy & Neumann, 2012, p. 20). The

aforementioned quickness to publish to this platform paired with the ability to easily add graphics and images creates a scenario where war journalism can thrive, and it is an important realization to understand that certain situations will present this very opportunity.

While the idea of martyrdom is outside the scope of this research, this examination does support previous research regarding the use of such iconography to a status near that of propaganda. Palestinians have historically leveraged their losses to unify, using images to do so. With the ease of dissemination of such iconography through mediums such as Twitter, it is important to consider how images and graphics can themselves be viewed and framed in terms of their impact outlets attempting to incorporate the frame of peace journalism.

A third finding is the ability of social media to find specific audiences or niches make it more difficult to apply peace journalism to coverage if an organization wishes to maintain that audience. In this interconnected world, anyone can find any opinion that they seek; the use of meta-data tags to connect groups of people online are a sign of this. The use of specific tags by media outlets allow them to communicate directly to a specific audience, which allows them to tailor that message accordingly. This was the case in Operation Brother's Keeper, as the selected news outlets on each side leveraged meta-data tags to promote their sides' coverage. In utilizing meta-data tags such as #BringBackOurBoys and #PalUnderAttack, it creates a funnel for those in search of only one take on the conflict. In clicking on these tags, any user can be brought to a collection of articles showing that side of the war.

In addition to this one-sided nature is the concern that comes with user-generated content that may be filed underneath these meta-data tags. Research conducted by Siapera, Graham Hunt, and Lynn (2015) examined the use of Twitter during Operation Protective Edge (the IDF operation immediately following Operation Brother's Keeper); their findings stress that modern communication technologies, when used to discuss war, do not necessarily undue the traditional communication hierarchies, but it "may create new or modify" those that already exists (p.1316). One of those ways of modification to the mediality of Twitter, which has allowed it to connect individual users in a pyramid structure with not only the traditional media-related individuals at the top (such as journalists, politicians, and spokespeople), but also one new group of users: The witnesses to the conflict (Siapera, Hunt, & Lynn, 2015). As technology expands exponentially, so will the way it is used to tell the stories of conflict and war. The potential for a continued modification of that which is labeled "media" will create additional need for awareness of the source of information.

### **Limitations of the current study**

A major limitation of this research is that it only covers one operation that was a part of a larger conflict in the history of two entities that have been in conflict multiple times. Only tweets disseminated during the three-week Operation Brother's Keeper were analyzed; there is still seven weeks of coverage that came with Operation Protective Edge, the more war-torn of the two operations. The conflicts of 2014 were just one of the few rounds of violence between the two entities since Twitter was released in 2006. There are other conflicts and other tweets available for the same quantitative research and analysis.

Another limitation of this research is that it does not consider user-generated content and its consumption as part of the new media environment. User-generated content has given rise to the new phenomena in news coverage of citizen journalism, which has allowed those on the scene to report news events as well. That burgeoning aspect of journalism (and its ability to convey messages aligned with peace journalism) lend itself to further analysis.

A final limited of this his research is that it only examines the use of one form of social media. As new mediums are constantly invented, there is little reason to doubt they will not find a purpose and role in media coverage. Further analysis could include an examination of any other mainstream social media platforms (such as Instagram and Facebook).

### **Implications for future research**

Future research may examine the use of Twitter between a different conflict in a different region. Replicating this research in a different area in turmoil (such as the Yemen Civil War) may yield helpful results in understanding how Twitter can be used to diffuse tenants of peace journalism. The examination of the same news sources analyzed in this research during the same conflict (Operation Brother's Keeper) but through a different social media platform would also lend itself to future research; seeing what coverage (if any) was provided through Facebook, Instagram, or another platform would provide additional insight into how these news outlets leverage social media, especially in regard to peace journalism.

A second idea for future research could consist of an analysis of printed media versus that of digital items. This research only examined how these individual sources leveraged

Twitter; additional research could be conducted to compare the difference in coverage from print to electronic media. This could provide insight to whether or not there is a drastic change in coverage as it pertains to peace journalism from one format to the next.

This research could potentially lend itself to qualitative measures as well, and future researchers may be interested in examining the overall percentage of tweets related to the conflict. Finding a numerical as it relates to the actual quantity of war-related messages would provide another metric for analysis. That would serve as a supplement to the quantitative analysis by creating a new lens through which to see the how much of the new outlet's use of Twitter was related to the actual conflict.

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## Appendix

Table 1: The peace journalism model as developed by Galtung (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p. 6)

<b>PEACE/CONFLICT JOURNALISM</b>	<b>WAR/VIOLENCE JOURNALISM</b>
<p><i>I. PEACE/CONFLICT ORIENTED</i></p> <p>Explore conflict formation, x parties, y goals, z issues, general "win, win" orientation</p> <p>Open space, open time; causes and outcomes anywhere, also in history/culture</p> <p>Making conflict transparent</p> <p>Giving voice to all parties; empathy, understanding</p> <p>See conflict/war as problem, focus on conflict creativity</p> <p>Humanization of all sides; more so the worse the weapon</p> <p>Proactive: Prevention before any violence/war occurs</p> <p>Focus on invisible effects of violence (trauma and glory, damage to structure/culture)</p>	<p><i>I. WAR/VIOLENCE-ORIENTED</i></p> <p>Focus on conflict arena, 2 parties, 1 goal (win), war general zero-sum orientation</p> <p>Closed space, closed time; causes and exits in arena, who threw the first stone</p> <p>Making wars opaque/secret</p> <p>"Us/Them" journalism, propaganda, voice, for "us"</p> <p>See "them" as the problem, focus on who prevails in war</p> <p>Dehumanization of "them"; more so the worse the weapon</p> <p>Reactive: Waiting for violence before reporting</p> <p>Focus only on the visible effect of violence (killed, wounded, and material damage)</p>
<p><i>II. TRUTH-ORIENTED</i></p> <p>Expose untruths on all sides/uncover all cover-ups</p>	<p><i>II. PROPAGANDA-ORIENTED</i></p> <p>Expose "their: untruths/help "our" cover-ups</p>
<p><i>III. PEOPLE-ORIENTED</i></p> <p>Focus on suffering all over; on women, aged, children, giving voice to voiceless</p> <p>Give name to all evil-doers</p> <p>Focus on people peace-makers</p>	<p><i>III. ELITE-ORIENTED</i></p> <p>Focus on "our" suffering; on able-bodied elite males, being their mouthpiece</p> <p>Give name to their evil-doers</p> <p>Focus on elite peace-makers</p>
<p><i>IV. SOLUTION-ORIENTATED</i></p> <p>Peace = non-violence + creativity</p> <p>Highlight peace initiatives, also to prevent more war</p> <p>Focus on structure, culture, the peaceful society</p> <p>Aftermath: Resolution, reconstruction, reconciliation</p>	<p><i>IV. VICTORY-ORIENTED</i></p> <p>Peace = victory + ceasefire</p> <p>Conceal peace initiatives, before victory is at hand</p> <p>Focus on treaty, institution, the controlled society</p> <p>Leaving for another war, return if the old flares up again</p>

Table 2: The grouping of the truncated 17 points of peace journalism

VIOLENCE-WAR/VICTORY/ AND CONFLICT/PEACE JOURNALISM (DIVISIONAL REPORTING)	PROPAGANDA/TRUTH OTIENTED (SUBJECTIVE REPORTING)
1. conflict consisting of only 2 parties 2. stark distinction between self and other 6. focus on what divides parties 8. blaming someone	7. only reporting violence 9. solely...one party 14. focusing on human rights...just one side 17. leaders of reporter's side to suggest solution
ELITE/PEOPLE ORIENTED (SEMANTICS)	VICTORY/SOLUTION ORIENTED (RESOLUTION-CENTERED REPORTING)
10. victimizing language 11. emotive words 12. adjectives that demonize 13.demonizing labels	3. only going on in the place and time that the violence is happening 4. merits of a violent action policy in terms...obvious effects 6. parties define themselves...leaders 15. opinion said like proven fact 16. cessation of violence into creation of peace

## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

Kayla LaTarte was born and raised in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Her adoration of history and the written word followed Kayla into her undergraduate years; she earned a Bachelor's of Applied Arts in Teaching Social Studies (History Concentration) and in Teaching Communication Arts/Literature from the University of Minnesota Duluth. Upon graduation, Kayla returned home to teach and inspire the students the area she has always called home, and had taught in several rural communities before accepting her current position at the historic Hibbing High School in Hibbing, Minnesota. Kayla enrolled in Johns Hopkins University in 2014, and use the amazing educational opportunity to research her two loves: Digital communications and the Middle East/North Africa region. At the time of submission, she was still living in Grand Rapids with hopes of continuing the research she began during her graduate studies.